

Facts & Information

May 1999

Calling Party Pays

Background

The Federal Communications Commission is considering making it easier for wireless companies to charge non-wireless customers for calls made to their customers. This practice is referred to as Calling Party Pays (CPP).

Usually when a wireless customer receives a call, the receiving customer pays for the per-minute charges associated with that call. CPP would make the person who originates the call liable for the per-minute charges, regardless of whether the caller is a customer of the wireless phone provider. Currently, CPP works in Washington when a wireless company has a billing agreement a local telephone company. U S WEST Communications, Inc. is the only local telephone company in Washington that will bill their customers for calls made to a wireless phone.

The FCC is expected to come out with new rules for billing and for customer notification of the billing some time in 1999.

How Calling Party Pay calls are billed.

CPP is an optional service available to wireless telephone customers through their service provider. In U S West service territory, a caller to a CPP customer will be billed a per-minute wireless charge for the call even if the caller is not using a wireless phone.

State authority over this practice.

The state and the UTC do not regulate wireless service. The FCC does. Furthermore, since billing and collection services is considered a competitive activity, the UTC has limited authority and oversight regarding the practice of charging customers for CPP calls. However, the UTC can provide mediation in billing disputes and can ensure that billing problems associated with CPP do not result in the loss of local telephone service.

Local phone service cannot be affected by CPP charges.

The Commission's consumer protection policies do not allow local telephone companies from disconnecting customers if they fail to pay for nonregulated services, such as calls made to a wireless phone. cellular.

How to recognize a CPP call before completing one.

The FCC expects to set standards for providing notice to customers before the call is completed. Currently, there is no standard. Today a calling party pay call requires dialing "1" even when the call is local. CPP users are assigned the following unique prefixes: 589 in Aberdeen, 797 in Auburn, 839 in Belfair, 305, 333, 393 in Bellingham, 690 in Colville, 231 in Everett, 691 in Newport, 870 in Olympia, 477 in Port Angeles, 316 in Port Townsend, 375 and 962 in Seattle, 463 in Shelton, 265 in Silverdale, and 278 in Tacoma.



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